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It was a glorious welcome to our new home and we felt that our opportunity to serve in this great struggle was now before us. The journey was over and after little disturbance or delay, sixty-five weary nurses became oblivious to all about them as they lay on temporary beds on the floor,—the beginning of active service at the front.

*(To be continued)*

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## FOOD CONSERVATION AND INVALID COOKERY

BY ALICE URQUHART FEWELL

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In spite of our efforts toward food conservation during this past year, we are told by the Food Administration that even more care will be required in the future if we are to make the necessary shipments of food to Europe. The laying down of arms has not solved the food problem, for with the coming of peace we must help to feed those countries with whom we have been fighting, and it will be many months before food conditions in Europe return to normal.

We have been asked to conserve wheat, meat, fat, and sugar, and the conservation of these classes of food in their relation to invalid cookery is well worth discussion.

In order to save wheat, other cereals must be substituted in part, though the wheat regulations now are not as strict as they have been. Corn, oats, barley, rye, rice, tapioca, arrow root, soy beans, and potatoes may all be made into flour, and used as wheat substitutes. Corn meal and barley are, perhaps, the most commonly used.

There has been much discussion as to the food value and digestibility of the substitutes as compared with wheat, and the discussion is especially applicable to invalid cookery. It is conceded by authorities, generally, that such substitutes as corn, oats and barley, are equal in food value to wheat itself. Their digestibility depends largely on proper preparation and cooking. Barley, when well cooked, is as digestible as wheat, and barley flour made into gruel has long been used in the diet of infants and invalids. Cornmeal is, perhaps, the most difficult of digestion, but when cooked for a sufficient length of time, it is found to be digestible, and is well borne, even by invalids.

The flavor of the wheaten breakfast foods is preferred by most people, but the substitutes can be made quite as palatable by proper cooking, and by combination with fruit. When making cornmeal mush, a long, slow cooking is necessary to bring out the flavor and to render it digestible. The cornmeal should first be mixed with cold water, to prevent lumping when the boiling water is added. It must

be cooked directly over the fire for ten minutes, and in a double boiler over boiling water for three hours or more. A fireless cooker is excellent for all cereals, and when it is used, the cereal should remain in the cooker all night. Baked cornmeal or other cereal is delicious, and has quite a different flavor from that cooked in the usual way. Cook the cereal on top of the stove for ten minutes, then cover the utensil tightly, and bake in the oven for one hour. When a patient tires of oatmeal, try putting the oatmeal flakes through the finest division of the meat grinder before cooking. The result is very different from ordinary oatmeal.

Dried fruit added to cereal shortly before it is removed from the fire improves the flavor. Dates, prunes or figs may be used in this way. Besides making the substitute cereals more appetizing, these fruits are especially good for invalids on account of their laxative properties. The flavor of nearly all cereals is improved if hot milk is added, and the cereal vigorously beaten, for several minutes before serving.

When making wheatless bread or biscuit, more yeast and baking powder are required than for wheat flour. Wheatless bread should rise until triple in bulk instead of double in bulk. Rye flour more nearly approaches wheat than any of the other substitutes since it contains gluten, and bread and biscuit made of rye flour are very satisfactory. When substituting oat, rice, or potato flour for wheat in a recipe, use only one-half to three-fourths as much as would be required of wheat. Rye and barley flour may be substituted in the same proportion as wheat.

In our efforts to conserve meat we may substitute the following foods: fish, chicken, eggs, cheese, nuts, peas, and beans. Since fish and chicken are both more digestible than meat they should be served frequently to invalids in place of beef. Eggs served in various forms may be used, but cheese, nuts, peas, and beans are all rather difficult of digestion, and should be employed sparingly in invalid cookery. Cottage cheese, and the simple cream cheeses may be given, and nuts only when ground. Peas and beans are rendered more digestible if they are mashed after cooking and served in the form of a puree.

The saving of fat is one of the most important of the conservation measures. Butter and lard are needed in Europe, and we are asked to save these animal fats, and substitute vegetable fats for them, in part. Vegetable fats can be used in place of butter in cookery. Peanut oil, corn oil, and olive oil are all used for this purpose. Many of these oils are combined with other things to form firm fats which are adapted for use in making biscuits, cake, etc. Adults in good health may substitute a large proportion of vegetable fat in the diet, but

for children and invalids the animal fats are almost indispensable. The animal fats contain certain growth determinants necessary for the growth of children, and for the repair of tissue. It has been found that the wounds of soldiers heal more readily when animal fats are included in the diet. All patients recovering from surgical operations should have animal fat in the form of butter and cream, hence we see that we cannot carry too far the conservation of fats in invalid diet without detriment to the patient.

Economy must be practiced in serving butter, and care taken to see that none is wasted. Serve only small portions at first, giving a second serving if desired. Should any butter remain on the tray when the patient has finished, it may be sterilized by boiling and used for cooking. If a patient receives butter or cream with each meal, the vegetable fats may be used to replace butter entirely in cooking the food. Use one-fifth as much less of vegetable fat as would be required of butter in any recipe.

All fat left in the pan after meat or chicken is cooked, together with the fat from the top of soup, should be saved and made into drippings for use in cooking. The fat is first tried out by heating in a double boiler until the tissue shrivels. It is then strained through cheese cloth, and is clarified by boiling it with pieces of raw potato. After a second straining it is allowed to cool and become firm, when it is ready for use. Clarified chicken fat is most excellent for making cake.

The conservation of sugar has been brought home to us very forcibly by the "two-pound sugar ration." This amount barely provided sugar for table purposes, and we had to look elsewhere for sweetening substances in cooking. Honey, corn syrup, maple syrup, molasses, and maple sugar are all substitutes for cane sugar. Honey, maple syrup, and maple sugar may all be used in the same proportions as sugar in a recipe. Corn syrup and molasses are considerably less sweet than sugar, and must be used in larger quantities. Almost twice as much corn syrup as sugar is required for sweetening desserts. When using corn syrup, maple syrup, or honey in a recipe containing liquid, use one-fourth cup less of liquid for every cup of syrup or honey used. A cup of honey is considered equal to a cup of sugar plus one-fourth cup water. Honey is especially good for sweetening desserts, ice cream or cake, and is adaptable to invalid cookery since it is easily digested and has slight laxative properties. Maple sugar should be shaved or grated before it is used; it is good for sweetening and flavoring custards.

Save wheat, meat, fat, and sugar, wherever you can, and make intelligent use of the conservation substitutes.